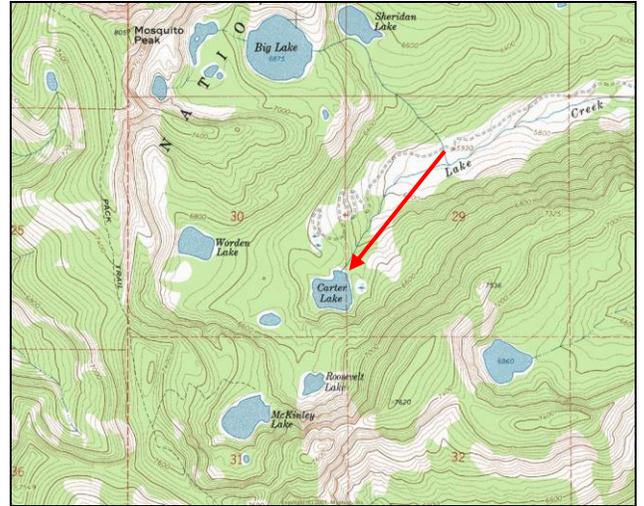


# Carter Lake



**Description:** Carter Lake is a small (12.9 acres), remote glacial cirque lake located within designated Wilderness in the Rattlesnake Creek drainage near Missoula at ~ 6,300 ft elevation. To increase storage volume, the lake was artificially impounded by a dam at the outlet in 1921. This structure still elevates the normal surface water elevation, but may also increase annual water level fluctuations.

**Location:** T15N, R18W, Section 30; Latitude N47.0252°, Longitude W113.9130°; Nearest Town: Missoula, MT  
Surrounding land ownership: Lolo National Forest (Missoula Ranger District). Carter Lake lies within the Rattlesnake Wilderness Area at the head of lake Creek.

**Access:** Although this lake is geographically close to the city of Missoula, access is difficult. There are several USFS routes from which to choose. Route distance and difficulty varies, but all require non-motorized travel. Common starting points are the trailheads at West Fork Gold Creek (Trail # 52), Ravine Creek in lower Grant Creek (Trail # 34), or in lower Rattlesnake Creek at the main Rattlesnake National Recreation Area trailhead (Gated Road #99). Please refer to USFS maps for specific travel routes and connecting trail numbers. Total travel distance from trailheads to lake ranges from 8-16 miles.

**Camp Sites and Use:** Carter Lake lies in a remote setting that receives light use. There is an established trail to the lake (USFS Trail #534) and one lightly used campsite on the east end of the dam embankment. 'Leave no trace' camping and recreating is essential in this area, as the lake lies within designated Wilderness.

**Angling Opportunity:** Carter Lake supports a wild westslope cutthroat trout population with abundant natural reproduction. Shoreline topography and access lend well to shoreline angling along most of the lake perimeter.

**Stocking History:** Carter Lake was historically stocked with westslope cutthroat trout and the most recent record was 2,700 fish planted in 1969. No future stocking is planned as the lake supports a self-sustaining population.

**Angling Pressure:** Estimated angling pressure from Montana state-wide mail surveys in 2005-2009 was low and averaged < 50 angler-days per year.

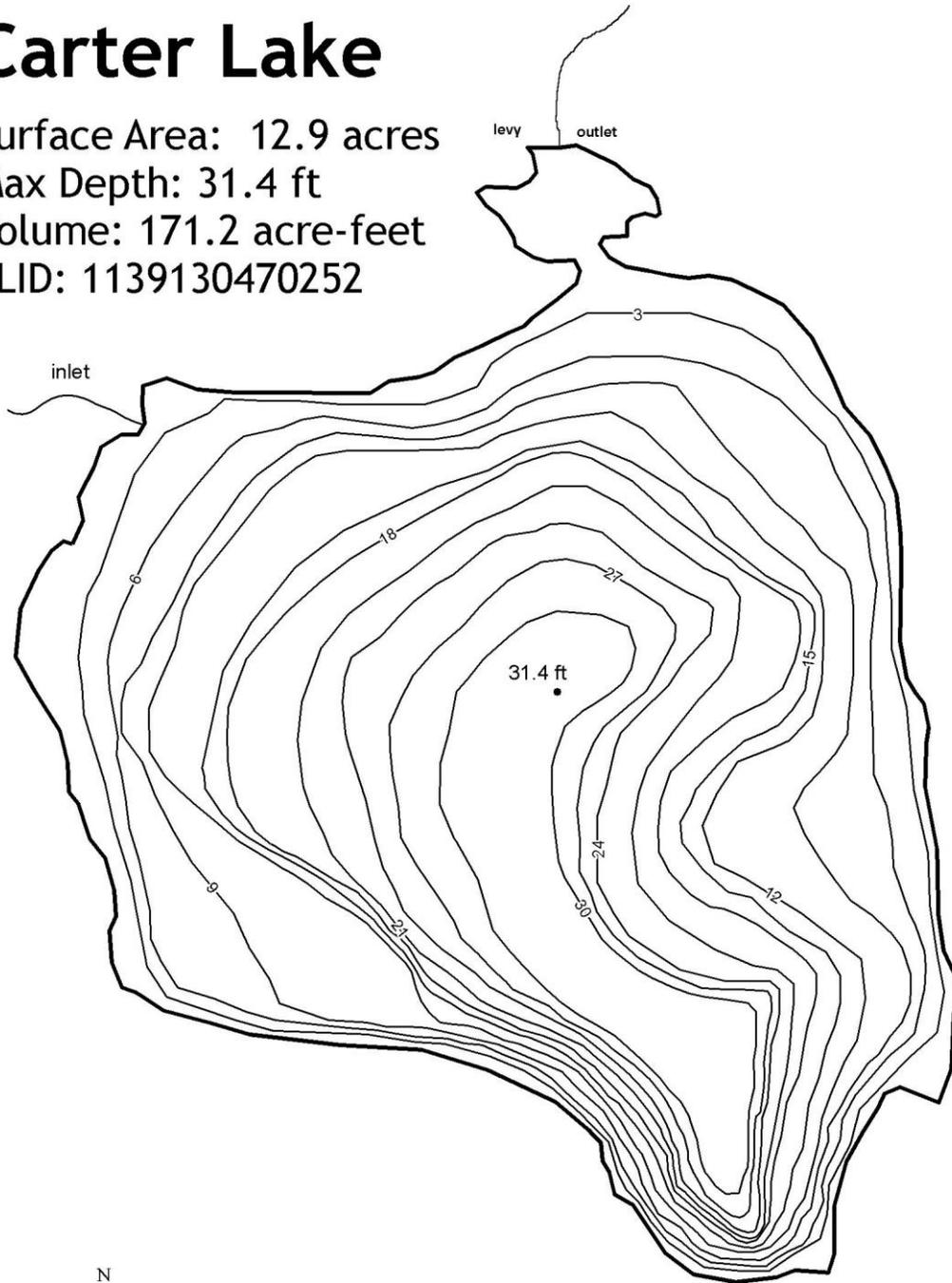
**Other Nearby Lakes:** There are four other fish-bearing lakes within 1 mile of Carter Lake. Big and Sheridan Lakes lie ~ 1 mile to the north, Worden Lake is ~ 0.50 mile to the west, and McKinley lake lies ~ 0.5 miles to the southwest. These lakes can be accessed via established USFS trails from Carter Lake.



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**

# Carter Lake

Surface Area: 12.9 acres  
Max Depth: 31.4 ft  
Volume: 171.2 acre-feet  
LLID: 1139130470252



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**



Three foot contours and volume calculations produced in ArcMAP  
using field measurements collected August 17, 2007.  
IS Request 8035 - R2 Mountain Lake Bath Maps  
Strategic Planning and Data Services

Helena, MT  
June 8, 2010